6: Fiorncy--333 (1936) 1937 Jivaro
116, 124, 197

'Contribution to the study of the Jívaro or Šuar Language' by Bertrand Fiorncy

This abstract was made between August 1 and October 30, 1936 in the eastern region of Ecuador inhabited by the Jivero Indians of the Achual group. These Indians live on the banks of the lagoons and rivers which flow into the river Pastaza, on its right bank. Later during my trip into the territories of the Aguaruna and Huambisa peoples, noting simply some differences in pronunciation, especially as regards the letter r. It seems to me that these groups, separated by several days of march overland or by water and belonging to the Jivero tribe, have no difficulty in understanding each other during their rare encounters.

Lacking an interpreter at the beginning of my investigation, I communicated by signs. Later an adult Jivaro from the river Huasaga who knew several words of kiíua, served as interpreter with Mr. Ramon Ciella, the taxidermist of the Mission as intermediary.

I was accompanied by several Aguarunas and by one Atschual. Unfortunately, none of them was able to speak and understand Spanish well enough; the conversation therefore had to be done through an interpreter who knew Ketschua. Moreover, I did not have the time to check the information which I received.

31: Danielsson--89-90 (1946-48) 1949 Jivaro
116, 124, 186

"From the total population (see Table I) in the area studied (see Map II) all male adults were interviewed. (Adults are all who have passed the initiation rites.) Each one was asked separately by the interpreter whom he regarded as a friend and whom he regarded as an enemy, the [90] same Jibaro words always being used, winya pingera (friend, good people) and winya tuna (enemy, bad people). The interviews were repeated a second time. Only in 6 % of the cases was there variation in the replies. Those cases were more thoroughly questioned and the results so secured were accepted."

32:Harner E-5 (1956-1957) 1962 SD9 Jivaro 2D9

Jivaro Souls

MICHAEL J. HARNER
[illegible]

THE Jivaro people (eastern Indians of eastern Ecuador have long been famous for their warlike practices,[1] but the assumptions about reality upon which they predicate such behavior have not been systematically studied and analyzed.[2] A very important series of these assumptions is to be found in the Jivaro ideas concerning souls. Among these concepts has recently been discovered a deep-seated belief that killing leads to the acquisition of souls which provide a supernatural power conferring immunity from death. The purpose of the present paper is to outline some of the basic elements of these beliefs with the hope of providing a greater insight into Jivaro behavior.[3]

The emphasis here will be on presenting new data collected in 1956-57,[4] but the concluding paragraphs of the paper embody a commentary on relevant statements in the major publications dealing with this subject. To the extent it should be mentioned that I took the two most useful works on the Jivaro (Karsten 1935; Stirling 1938) into the field and went over them in detail with native informants. Accordingly, points of difference between the following material and that given by Karsten and Stirling should definitely be taken by the reader to indicate modifications or refutation of the previously published statements, at least in regard to the Jivaro proper.[5]

Field research providing the present data was conducted for ten and a half months in the following river valleys occupied by the Jivaro: the Rio Upano and its tributaries, the Rio Tutanangoza and the Rio Supa; the Rio Chiguaza; the Rio Macuma; the Rio Cangaimi, the Rio Cusuimi; the Rio Mangosiza; and in a refugee Jivaro settlement near Bucay on the western slope of the Andes. Informants who contributed particularly to the information embodied in the present paper were: *Mukumpit*, *Tsukumpit*, *Uhlit Akalo*, *Kayuit*, and *Uwia Akalo* of the Rio Tutanangoza; *Wata* of the upper Rio Macuma; and *Hiwiat* of the Rio Cangaimi. Chief interpreters were *Wuwa*, *Tupi*, and *Naita*, all from the Rio Tutanangoza region.

The best information on supernatural concepts was obtained in intensive eight or nine hour daily interviews with single informants over periods of a few days to several weeks. This was an exhausting procedure for all involved: interviewer, interpreter, and informant, but was conducive to the elicitation of truthful detail. Informants' accounts were continually cross-checked and contradictions called to their attention individually. An informant, when thus confronted with a contradiction, and with his reputation for knowledge and veracity at stake, generally provided elaborative supporting detail which he might not have otherwise volunteered.

[illegible] explanation of footnotes, see category 116, pp. 290-292

12:Harner E-9 (1956-1957) 1962 SD9 Jivaro SD9

Reluctance of informants to talk about supernatural or personal matters was in part overcome by paying them well for the time they put in, the money was commonly in the form of black gunpowder, percussion caps, lead shot, glass and metallic beads, and cloth. In localities of [illegible] settlements, money was used as well. In visiting [illegible] found that a gift of an ounce or two of gunpowder invariably resulted in a friendly visit, since almost all Jivaro men today possess [illegible] replenishment of their supplies of ammunition. Long talks given by [illegible] of the tribal territory typically involved [illegible] my future return and "taking orders" for additional types of trade goods to be brought on the next visit. Thus, my host viewed our [illegible] to his advantage and an amicable departure always occurred. It was also [illegible] that I was often leaving directly [illegible] household or neighborhood with which he was dealing.

The following summary of soul beliefs is presented with two [illegible] times. First, as a summary, it omits considerations of the [illegible] personal variability which is an characteristic of this [illegible] Second here is a consensus of the views of men who were [illegible] the field of religious beliefs and practices by the other members of the tribe. And, I do not claim to have completely mastered the [illegible] Jivaro supernatural concepts, what is presented here should be viewed as a progress report on our knowledge of Jivaro soul beliefs. I fully expect additional field research to result in refinements of some of the statements presented here.

The 4,500 to 5,000 Jivaro people live in a dense tropical rain forest environment amidst the hilly terrain at the foot of the eastern slope of the Ecuadorian Andes. The main source of food is shifting horticulture, with sweet manioc the chief crop. Hunting and fishing also have important roles in the economy. The basic economic and social unit is the nuclear family which most commonly occupies a house by itself. Such houses are scattered throughout the forest in very loose-knit neighborhood groupings, the Jivaro preferring not to live close together for explicitly-stated anti-social reasons. Except in time of war, formal political organization is completely lacking at the neighborhood level and is never found at the tribal level. [illegible] and hostility are characteristic of the attitude toward fellow tribesmen, including many close relatives. Sorcery as well as murder by means of physical violence and poisoned food and drink are prevalent in the society.

Jivaro soul beliefs constitute one of the four major autochthonous systems of verbalized thought so far noted in their culture. The other three are the system of crop fairy (cognate) beliefs, of witchcraft beliefs, and the kinship system. On a conscious level, each of these systems derives from independent assumptions and can be described as a logical unit in itself, though these conceptual systems may be functionally interrelated as an expression of unconsciously existing needs. Since belief in one of these systems is not explicitly based upon belief in another, an adequate understanding of Jivaro soul beliefs

14:Harner E-6. 5 (1956-1969)1973 SD9 Jivaro SD9

since he was able to spend only a few short months with the Jivaro in comparison with Karsten's interminate work during several years. Stirling's interpreter was Santiago Baca of Méndez, whom I knew personally, and whom on one occasion I served as an interpreter. Although a fine person, Baca hardly would let an Indian speak before he reinterpreted and expanded what had been said to fit his own preconceptions. The following portion of a letter from Stirling to me, dated June 30, 1961, in response to an article which I had just published on Jivaro soul beliefs,[2] shows the role of Baca in his work. I would like to add that I consider the letter a tribute to Stirling's scholarly integrity:

> It is high time that adequate studies are finally being made of this significant group. When I made my rather hasty trip through the Jivaro country in 1930-31, the working conditions were far from ideal. The expedition was badly organized and from the standpoint of the ethnologist we were never able to stay in one place long enough to get proper results. I knew nothing of the Jivaro language, and depended entirely on the interpreter-Santiago Baca-for the esoteric information. What I recorded was what he understood from the informants. He was, incidentally, a political refugee and had lived 2 years with the Jivaro in hiding.
>
> It is interesting to note that most of the Jivaro we encountered at that time insisted that they knew nothing of religious beliefs -that we would have to contact old Arguasha (on the Yaupi [Yaupi] River). We finally did encounter him, and he was the source of most of this type of material which I secured. I am sure that he was a good informant-very sincere and desirous of being precise-so the errors were probably the result of misunderstanding by the interpreter, since I tried not to fit in my interpretations of my own. I had Karsten's work with me, and after getting our own material I checked with Karsten's accounts. The Indians would agree with practically none of his ideas, in-

34:Harner E-4, 5 (1956-1969)1973 SD9 Jivaro SD9

124 Informants' accounts were continually cross-checked and contradictions called to their attention individually. An informant, when thus confronted with a contradiction, and with his reputation for knowledge and veracity at stake, generally provided elaborative supporting detail.

Informants were ordinarily well paid for the time they [465] spent. Payment was commonly in the form of black gun- [436] powder, percussion caps, lead shot, glass and metallic beads, [797] and cloth. Near Ecuadorian and missionary settlements, money was used as well. When visiting strange households 123 it was found that a gift of an ounce or two of gunpowder 124 invariably resulted in a friendly stay, since almost all Jivaro [411] men today possess firearms and continually need replenishment of their supplies of ammunition. Leave-taking in the more isolated parts of the tribal territory typically involved assuring the host of my future return and "taking orders" for additional types of trade goods to be brought on the next visit. [628] Thus my host viewed my continued friendship as being to his advantage and an amiable departure always occurred despite the fact that I was often leaving directly (with gunpowder and other goods) for a household or neighborhood with which he was feuding.

124 My chief mode of communication to obtain detailed infor- [191] mation was through interpreters. However, unlike my pred- [795] ecessors, I exclusively used for this purpose Jivaro men who had learned Spanish as a second language at mission stations. I used a variety of interpreters, eventually working mainly with those who had proven themselves the most accurate, [122] reliable and intelligent. As my own knowledge of the language progressed, I was able to check up on much of that which they interpreted, but even before that stage the comparison of different accounts on the same subject by using different interpreters and informants made substantial veri-

34:Harner E-4.5 (1956-1969)1973 SD9 Jivaro SD9

fication possible. I personally believe that the proper use of first-class interpreters is an excellent field technique, but that it must be done with sophistication involving constant rephrasing of the same questions in different contexts with various interpreters and informants and supplemented by as much participant observation as possible. It seems likely that at least as many errors in ethnographic research can be committed by the fieldworker who is under the delusion that he is "fluent" in the language, and who fails to check his results through interpreters, as by the researcher who recognizes his linguistic limitations and uses trained interpreters with sensible caution and patience.

The research providing the present data was conducted for a total of fourteen field months in 1956–57, 1964 and 1969, primarily in the following river valleys occupied by the Jivaro: the Río Chiguasa; the Río Macuma; the Río Cangaimi; the Río Cusuimi; the Río Mangosiza; and the Río Upano and its tributaries. Except where otherwise stated, the ethnographic data presented here refer to the culture of those Jivaro who in 1956–57 were not yet in regular first-hand contact with Ecuadorians or other whites.

The 1956–57 field investigation was sponsored by the Henry L. and Grace Doherty Charitable Foundation, Inc., of New York, with supplementary grants from the Department of Anthropology and the Museum of Anthropology of the University of California, Berkeley, the American Museum of Natural History, and the American Anthropological Association (Smith, Kline and French Laboratories contract). The organization and study of the collected data upon my return from the field was facilitated by a University Fellowship in Anthropology from the University of California and by a summer grant from the Social Science Research Council.

34:Harner E-4, 5 (1956-1969)1973 SD9 Jivaro SD9

Chapter VI

CULTURAL CHANGE

Information on cultural change among the interior Jivaro was obtained exclusively from elderly informants, a method which was necessitated by the lack of written records. By employing such time markers as the appearance of Halley's Comet (1910),[1] the end of visits by rubber collectors (ca. 1914-15), and the dates of the founding of various missions among the frontier Jivaro, of which the interior Jivaro were aware, approximate indications were obtained of the inception and duration of many of the changes. Such information usually consisted of reports of trends rather than of abrupt alterations in native cultural practices, the isolation of the interior area having protected the Jivaro there from the disruptive incursions of the gold miners, missionaries, and settlers to the west.

In the absence of adequate historical documentation, interviewing techniques were used which had already been developed in "salvage" or "memory" ethnography among North American Indians. Using such techniques, anthropologists in such areas as California had succeeded in making very useful reconstructions of bygone aboriginal cultures with no more than a few aged informants as their source of information. In the Jivaro case, the task was much easier, in that there was still a fully functioning native culture and a variety of good informants whose accounts could be compared in determining what changes had occurred during their lifetimes.

To check the reliability of the oral accounts of cultural

14 Harner E-4, 5 (1956-1969)1973 SD9 Jivaro SD9

124 changes, the investigator normally attempted to compare the views of a number of persons regarding modifications in each type of cultural activity. Accordingly, a trend is reported here only if it was substantiated independently by at least several reliable informants. To heighten the accuracy of such information, the trends reported here are further restricted to those which the informants had observed during the passage of their own lifetimes. Changes that had reportedly gone on in the culture previously, and for which the informants was therefore of a hearsay type, are not included unless specifically so noted. Thus the reported
114 changes primarily occurred during the period ca. 1895–1957. The ethnographic present in this chapter, as elsewhere, is 1956–57.

121 It should be pointed out that the material that follows
124 often includes consideration of causal factors from the informants' point of view. Such statements of opinion regarding causal relationships between changes are, unless otherwise indicated, those of elderly, knowledgeable informants whom I respected for their intelligence and ability to analyze the events about them. In asking and reporting the opinions of native informants about causality I depart from the position of some anthropologists who have seemed to doubt the ability of non-literate peoples to provide meaningful analysis of causal relationships within their own culture. On the
121 contrary, I have found that the Jivaro are extremely aware of,
124 and alert to, the factors directly influencing their lives, and
151 normally I found their hypotheses superior to those that I
181 proposed and tested in the field. Unlike some other non-literate populations, for example the Conibo Indians of eastern Peru, whom I have also studied, the Jivaro almost never explain any behavior, traditional or otherwise, on the basis of such a statement as "we do it that way because our ancestors

14 Harner E-6, 5 (1956-1968)1973 SD9 Jivaro SD9

did" or "we do it that way because other people would laugh at us if we did it differently." The Jivaro seem proud of their ability to judge for themselves the usefulness of continuing or changing their traditional behavior on very pragmatic and personal grounds. All this does not mean to convey the idea that the Jivaro are natural anthropologists, but simply that their knowledge of the factors which influence the changes that they make as individuals should be respected sufficiently to be collected and included as useful ethnological data.

The main variables introduced into interior Jivaro culture during the period studied were Western-manufactured trade goods, especially machetes, axes, and guns. Some machetes were acquired by the frontier Jivaro near Macas about a hundred years ago,[5] but very few reached the interior Jivaro by intra-tribal trade until the turn of the century, and even these were so scarce and valued that their blades were each split into fragments to permit their utilization by several households. The more efficient steel blade fragments were at first used in the same manner as the aboriginal stone axe heads, each machete piece being mounted into a wooden handle. After the 1930's, however, machetes became sufficiently abundant so that the need to split the blades into small fragments was eliminated. They also largely replaced by then the traditional palm-wood "machetes" used in cutting down garden weeds. Despite their fair degree of availability at the present time, steel machetes are still highly valued and are used for many years, long after they have lost their handles and have become worn down to a fraction of their former size. Today they are considered to be utterly indispensable tools by the Jivaro, who also have been able to acquire some single-bitted steel axe-heads, although in much smaller numbers than the machetes.